

RAINBOW FORCES OUR CQ CROSSING

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American counter-barrage, to lose their impetus, and to arrive before the real combat positions only at about 7 a.m.

Here, however, they made manifold efforts to storm the lines held by the French and the 42nd Division. But their attacks, repeated often and furiously, were of no avail. One battalion of the 166th United States Infantry alone repulsed seven attacks before 11:30 a.m., and by noon the Germans, staggering under frightful losses, had been thrown back everywhere into the old French front lines, upon which the Allied artillery, familiar with every angle and dugout, directed a searching fire.

More of 42nd Brought Up

During the afternoon two and a half battalions more of the 42nd Division were advanced into the intermediate position. But, though the enemy made one more general attack that evening and several local attacks next day, maintaining a vicious bombardment of the front and rear areas all the time, the effort had been practically expended on the morning of the first day; by the 18th he was making no aggressive movements, and by the 19th he began withdrawing his attack divisions.

Acting similarly upon the evidence, the French command withdrew the 42nd Division, whose losses had been about 450 killed and 1,350 wounded or gassed, and it was taken to La Ferté-sous-Journe, where it rested for two days, and then went by trucks to the relief of the 26th Division, in the Forêt de Fere. At the time of the arrival of the 2nd on the line the confusion of the salient had resulted in gradually so narrowing the fronts of the divisions that some of them could be taken out. The 8th Brigade accordingly took over the entire front given up by the 26th Division, all the artillery of the latter remaining in the sector to support the fresh brigade, while the 83rd Brigade took over the sector of the 167th French Division, with all the artillery of the 42nd Division in support.

The changes consumed the day and most of the night of July 25, and nothing much was accomplished except to develop by force the fact that the enemy's positions were strong. Apparently La Croix Rouge Farm, which evidently could not be taken in direct attack except at heavy loss.

Enemy Garrison Surprised

A ditch leading up to it from the woods was discovered, however, and two platoons of the 168th Infantry, taking this hidden way early on the morning of the 26th, captured the farm, which was then in a hot mêlée, and turned their machine guns in the other direction, eastward across the fields, to shoot at the Germans in the woods.

In the afternoon, in spite of greatly increased intensity in the enemy's shelling with phosphene gas and high explosive, a general advance of the 168th Infantry on the right of the farm and of the 167th on the left of it succeeded in netting a considerable gain through the upward sloping woods and fields, though much of it had to be relinquished a little later owing to the cross fire from the German machine guns in the angles of the woods.

The enforced retirement was successfully carried out through the bravery of such men as Cpl. S. E. Manning, 167th Infantry, who, being in charge of an automatic rifle squad from which he had lost several men, while he himself was wounded, continued advancing with his platoon until it was forced back, when he remained behind alone and covered its retirement, finally escaping himself with nine wounds in his body.

Back to Ourcq Line

Despite momentary reverses, however, La Croix Rouge Farm was the key to the position and, having lost it, the enemy during the night evacuated this front, falling back nearly six kilometers to the strongest defensive line he had yet taken up behind the Ourcq river.

Sacrifice machine gun detachments were left behind to fight the Allied advance at La Croix Rouge Farm and other isolated defensive positions, but nothing greatly delayed the forward movement of the 42nd Division Infantry, marching in regimental columns, or the scouts and French armored cars reconnoitering ahead of them down the long, open slopes, extending from the Forêt de Fere to the Ourcq, until about 8 o'clock in the evening, when the armored cars gained contact with the enemy by coming under machine gun fire on the bank of the little river. The Infantry then came to a halt for the night about a kilometer southwest of the stream.

It was evident from the map and more so from reconnaissance that if the enemy elected to stand on the positions he now occupied, the lines were drawn for a stubborn conflict. On the side of the Ourcq opposite the 42nd Division the hills, for the most part devoid of timber, sloped back gradually from the straggling village of Serj, in the valley, to heights of from 40 to 80 meters above it on the plateau to the north and east.

The heights to the east had flanked protection for the troops opposing the 42nd in a group of small, detached woodlands, the Arbres les Joinblets, the Bois de la Planchette and the Bois Pelger.

Rampart Behind Wet Ditch

On the other flank a creek, the Ru du Pont Brule, came down from the east, holding in its valley near its junction with the Ourcq, Meurey Farm and the patches of woodland called the Bois Colas and the Bois Brule and further up, the village and the chateau of Nesles. Behind Nesles, the edge of the forest of the same name sloped almost down to the creek, while, on an open crest still further to the right, the village of Serjings commanded Meurey Farm.

In effect, Serj and its plateau were a rampart behind the wet ditch of the Ourcq, with the Ru du Pont Brule as a second line, both flanking and supporting it and, in turn, flanked and supported by the third line, Serjings-Forêt de Nesle.

To garrison this natural fortress the enemy, according to the statements of prisoners, to what was left of his CCII Division had now added the XXVIII Division and the XIX Landwehr Division, and though his heavier calibers of artillery were not in evidence, there was a great plenty of 77mm., 105mm. and 150mm. batteries and, as the event proved, an overwhelming concentration of aviators.

As for the assailants, there would be nothing for it except to go in head on and batter their way through these lines. Along this part of the front it was to be now a straight contest between American and German, for the intervening French divisions had all been taken out and General Liggett, with the staff of the First United States Corps, for the moment commanded the

42nd, 28th and 3rd United States Divisions in front line from left to right. The 42nd, having now displaced two French divisions and one American, was strengthened in one respect—it had accumulated the batteries of all four divisions and its artillery fire power was quadrupled.

Sergy Bridges Blown Up

Dawn of the 28th crept down the hillsides of the Ourcq, and over them began the strains of the machine gun bullets. Left to right, the 166th, 165th, 167th and 168th Regiments of Infantry, thin wave following thin wave, moved down the banks of the Ourcq, which, swollen by the rains to a depth of three meters and a width of 15, was a formidable obstacle.

The two bridges near Sergy had been blown up by the enemy and the troops had to struggle through the water as best they could, in face of the intense front and flank fire from Sergy and Meurey Farm. At first a lodgement on the other bank was impossible. But at length elements of Col. Frank McCoy's New Yorkers contrived to retain a foothold, and by 10:30 a.m. parts of all four regiments were over.

The shelling, which the Allied artillery could not suppress, was very severe, and low-flying German planes at frequent intervals machine-gunned the front lines, though some of them came to grief at the hands of such men as Sgt. Frank Gardello, Jr., of the 165th Machine Gun Company, who with his machine gun riddled the upper one of two approaching planes, which fell upon the lower one, and both crashed to earth.

Acting upon the theory that nothing was to be gained either by lying still or by going back, the Alabama and Iowa men of the 84th Brigade shortly made a rush and took Sergy. But that was just what the Germans wanted. From the dominating woodlands of Joinblets, Planchette and Pelger they loosed down the draw leading to Sergy a hail of machine gun fire that blasted the Americans from the place and swept them back to the river bank.

Opposing Germany's Best

Here they rallied, returned to the charge and again drove the Germans from the village, leaving when they did so that the 17th Guard Division (Prussian Guards), one of the best in the German army, had just been put in against them. Time after time through the afternoon the battle lines thus swept back and forth in desperate conflict while further to the right at the southeastern base of Hill 220, on which stand the three woodlands, the 28th Division was vainly struggling to reach and capture the latter.

The sun was near to setting when at 8 o'clock Iowa and Alabama troops rolled into Sergy for the last time that evening, holding it under artillery and night bombing. To the left, the Ohio and New York troops of the 33rd Brigade had been striving as hard for the Sergy as the Alabama and Iowa, but had been unable to reach it.

Even Sergy itself was not yet finally taken, for early on the 29th the Germans rushed it again and drove their adversaries back to the Ourcq. The answer this time was a general attack of the division, including an advance to the plateau between Sergy and Meurey Farm.

Everything blazed up once more with the addition of numerous machine guns hidden in the wheat fields of the plateau. The most substantial progress at first was on the right, where by noon Colonel Bennett's Iowa took Sergy, when he remained behind alone and covered its retirement, finally escaping himself with nine wounds in his body.

It was while struggling for this crest, to give only one instance of the hot work, that Sgt. B. W. Hamilton, Co. M, ahead of his line and so badly wounded that he could not stand, was attacked by ten Prussian Guards, of whom he shot five, whereupon the rest fled.

Meurey Farm Falls to Bayonet

Further to the northwest, the 167th made some progress toward the top of the plateau, but in the left center the 165th could not approach Meurey Farm until a long concentration of artillery fire had put some of its machine gun nests out of action, and even then it was taken only by a bayonet attack in which the gunners were killed in hand to hand fighting.

Taken, it could barely be held under the lash of other machine guns in the edge of the Forêt de Nesles, and the bulk of the troops dug themselves in in the little Bois Colas, across the creek about 200 meters west of the farm.

Serjings, on its high, open hill, was not directly attacked until afternoon when Colonel Houder's men of the 168th Infantry, who had to form on the south side of the Ourcq and advance against the heavily garrisoned village and its many flanking machine gun nests across 1,200 meters of ground entirely devoid of timber, went forward in spite of everything and, unable to reach the village, worked around it to the northwest, took the crest of Hill 184, from there silenced the machine guns in the town and then stormed it, dealing with the German gunners as those at Meurey Farm had been dealt with or driving them northeast into the Forêt de Nesles.

Thus darkness found the American line. Prisoners taken near Sergy had proved the presence in that vicinity of yet another first-class German division, the Vth Bavarian Reserve, so that the enemy order of battle, as it came in contact with the 42nd Division, now appeared to be, from left to right, XIX Landwehr, Vth Bavarian Reserve, IVth Guard and CCII Divisions, and the density of the German line opposite the three American divisions, 42nd, 28th and 3rd, was for the moment much greater than anywhere else along the front.

Sniping Guns Aid Attack

Entirely regardless of the forces against them, the Rainbows kept on pushing. At 9 a.m. of the 30th, the 168th attacked out of the ravine of Sergy across the upland toward Nesles, while on its left, Colonel Screws started his Alabamians through the wheat fields of the plateau toward the Château de Nesles, closely supported by the 101st Field Artillery of the 26th Division and particularly by the sniping guns of Battery A.

With the latter destroying the German machine gun nests in front as fast as they were discovered, the 167th was able by noon to cross the plateau and establish itself on the hillside 100 meters south of the chateau. But the 168th, still flanked from the woodlands on Hill 200, could not progress more than 500 meters, when they dug in.

On the other end of the plateau, Colonel McCoy and his men, swept by a constant blast of fire from the Bois Brule and other parts of the valley of the Ru du Pont Brule just above them, could only burrow and hold on in the Bois Colas and the ruins of Meurey Farm, while many such brave spirits as

2nd Lieut. Oliver Ames, Jr., made here the last supreme sacrifice of heroism. Their exposed position was protected as much as possible by their supporting batteries of the 151st Field Artillery which, directed by 2nd Lieut. E. F. McCoy, artillery liaison officer in the front line, waged an unceasing duel with the German batteries and machine guns. On the left, the Ohio troops, holding to the crest of Hill 184 in spite of German counter-attacks, allowed the enemy during the afternoon to filter into Serjings until a large number were there and then, after dark, suddenly surrounded the place and, in a fierce hand to hand mêlée, mopped it up thoroughly. It was on this part of the front that 2nd Lieut. D. W. Peyton, 168th Infantry, to keep his comrades in ammunition, drove a wagon load of it into the front line positions in broad daylight and there delivered it.

3276 Lost in Wounded Alone

The division surgeon that evening reported the losses in wounded alone from July 24 to 8 p.m. July 30, as 3,276 men. The slightest progress could be made only at the cost of the hardest fighting and heavy sacrifice but, on the 31st, while most of the line remained dug in, the right of the 168th, working in close cooperation with the left of the 32nd division, conquered the Bois les Joinblets, the southern part of the Bois de la Planchette and the crest of Hill 220, between them.

Though on August 1 parts of the 168th were forced back slightly by German counter-attacks, on the other hand the 165th took the Bois Brule, while the 32nd Infantry on the left were slightly improved toward the Forêt de Nesles. The activities of the Germans increased in many particulars and their airplanes were extremely annoying, particularly one pursuit patrol, believed to belong to the "circus" formerly commanded by the famous ace, Captain Baron Richtofen, the favorite maneuver of which was to swoop low and pour machine gun fire into an American front line.

But the energy of the enemy was designed merely to conceal his preparations for retreat, for his Ourcq line of defense was now badly frayed at many points, and on his particular position on the 42nd Division, the American and French artillery during August 1 had quite thoroughly attained the upper hand over the German and compelled much of the latter to withdraw.

Engineers on Right Flank Front

During the night his infantry also retired, and on the morning of the 2nd, the 42nd Division took up the pursuit, with Colonel Kelly's 117th Engineers in front of the right flank, in place of the exhausted 168th Infantry. Though some machine gun and long range artillery opposition was encountered, after five days in the fox holes on a diet of cold fish and corned Willie, the men were in a mood to advance rapidly through the Forêt de Nesles where, although the noise of ammunition dumps being exploded by the enemy was frequently to be heard from the front, nearly 33,000 shells of various calibers were captured intact.

From front line lay that night north of Les Bons Hommes Farm, nearly five kilometers beyond the starting point of the morning and, during the 3rd, while continuing the pursuit toward the Vesle without halt, the relief of the troops of the 42nd Division by those of the 4th was gradually accomplished, the last front line elements being relieved in the vicinity of Chery Chartreuse and Mont St. Martin.

The division then drew back for a brief rest after having been in practically continuous offensive battle for nine days, during which period it advanced its front line approximately 19 kilometers, from La Croix Rouge Farm to Mont St. Martin.

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Apparently a new source of supply, but "once dog, always dog," and we agree with the author that while it sounds all right, we should hate to be followed around by a beret dog gazing at our trousers with an air of dismal proprietorship. Neither would it be convenient to have a lot of other dogs trying to bite the seat out of them.

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82nd Division After Rough Time in Argonne Goes on Parade

Having completed their share in the Argonne fight to the general satisfaction of everybody but Jerry, hiked across half of France to their training area and been thoroughly de-coated, the 82nd Division held a Horse Show at Prauthoy.

So successful was the show that it elicited a memorandum from the Commanding General of the Fifth Army Corps, commending the officers and men of the 82nd Division for their "initiative and enthusiasm" and the "spirit and energy" with which the affair was conducted.

There were ten classes of entrants, escort wagon, fourteen G.S. wagons, water wagons, ration carts, machine gun carts, one pounders, miscellaneous (including medical carts and everything else on wheels and propelled by horses), officers' mounts and riding horses, ridden by enlisted men. Judgment was rendered by three colonels borrowed from Corps Headquarters for the occasion, and the prizes were awarded not only for the condition of the horses and equipment, but for the skill shown by the drivers in getting over the intricate course laid out for the contestants. A handicap was imposed upon the drivers of the mule teams, for profanity in any form was barred. It was noted that the 82nd Infantry band, which was selected to furnish the music, played loudest while the mule teams were in action.

"Nigger" Wins First Prize

Capt. M. H. Patton, 325th Infantry, riding "Nigger," took first prize for the officers' mounts, while Captains Gunn and Bramlett, of the 324th and 326th Infantry regiments, took second and third places. In the "riding horses" class, Headquarters Troop, 82nd Division, walked away with all three prizes, which went to Pvt. Edward R. Pollen, Cpl. John J. Brown and Pvt. Wamsford Pegworth.

Winners in the other classes were: Escort Wagon: Charles Stengel, 427th Inf.; first: Francis E. Gonga, 327th Inf.; second: Herbert L. Larson, 82nd M.P. Co., third: Fountaine: Roullette G. Hagler, 327th Inf.

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Water Wagons: Frank J. Bales, Hq. Troop, 82nd Div., first; Samuel G. Hutton, 307th Field Sig. Bn., second; John D. Smith, 325th Inf., third.
Ration Carts: Carl W. Myland, 325th Inf., first; Edward Pitts, 321st M.G. Bn., second; Joseph Ehard, 82d M.P. Co., third.
Machine Gun Carts: Walter Johnson, 321st M.G. Bn., first; Leo Sims, 320th M.G. Bn., second.
One Pounders: Ralph Earlywine, 325th Inf., first; Otto Johnson, 325th Inf., second; William Parker, 325th Inf., third.
The "miscellaneous" class, which was perhaps the most hotly contested, contained every sort of entry, from field telephone reels to medical carts and ambulances. The first prize was taken by Huey Romeo, 82nd Co. Military Police, Infirmary Harry Lockwood, 307th Field Signal Battalion, was second and John Jenkins, 307th Engineers, third.

S.C. VETERANS UNITE

With the twofold purpose of perpetuating ties of friendship and aiding the dependents of comrades who have been killed or maimed for life in the war, the Signal Corps Veterans' Association of the War of 1917 is being organized. The founders of the association expect to enroll a membership of 68,000. The organization was started at Cour Cheverny, "Toot-Sweet," a newspaper published at that post by the Signal Corps, has been designated the official organ of the Veterans' Association, and is conducting a lively campaign for members.

It is proposed by the association to establish a benevolent trust fund to be expended in the aid of these men—and women—of the Signal Corps who "can look nowhere else for help but to their brothers in arms."

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